We did not meet with the nests of the Buff-backed Heron; and it seems probable that they are late breeders, as in those killed about the end of April the ovaries did not appear to be enlarged.

I purchased specimens of the eggs from the widow of the late M. Odascalchi, naturalist of Cairo, who had a large stock, and there seems no doubt of their genuineness. They are of the usual pale blue, vary considerably in size and shape, and have a very thin shell.

The Buff-backed Heron (*H. bubulcus*) is easily distinguished from the Little Egret, *H. garzetta*, even at a considerable distance, as the latter is almost invariably solitary, while its long, sharp, black bill contrasts strongly with the short, thick, yellow one of the former.

In consequence of its supposed sanctity among the Arabs, many people maintain that *H. bubulcus* is the true "Sacred Ibis," and no amount of proof to the contrary will make them think otherwise. I have never been able to hear of any one who has seen the *Ibis religiosa* in Egypt, and I only know of one instance in which the *I. falcinellus* occurred.

[To be continued.]

IV.—*Note on the Kestrel of Madagascar* (Tinnunculus newtoni).

By J. H. Gurney.

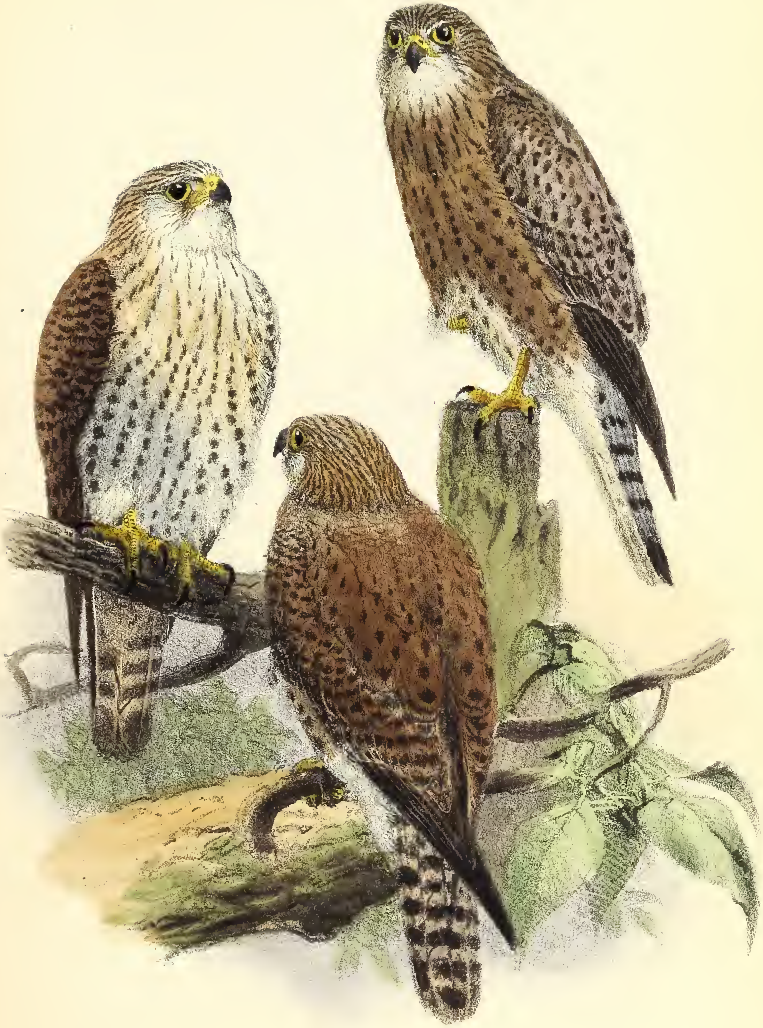
(Plate II.)

The Norwich Museum is indebted to the liberality of Mr. Edward Newton for a specimen of the *Tinnunculus gracilis* of Lesson, from the Seychelles Islands, and also for two Kestrels collected by him in Madagascar, and described under the same specific title of "*gracilis*," in 'The Ibis,' vol. iv. p. 267.

The sex of the specimen from the Seychelles Islands, above alluded to, has not been noted, but I am disposed to consider it a male bird.

The two individuals from Madagascar are both marked as males by Mr. Edward Newton.

On comparing the two Madagascar Kestrels with the spe-



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J.F. del et lith. M.&N. Hanhart imp.

TINNUNCULUS NEWTONI

cimen from the Seychelles, I find such a difference of size and colouring as to lead me to believe that they are not examples of *Tinnunculus gracilis,* but that they belong to a distinct and undescribed species. The following Table will show the measurements of these birds as compared with *Tinnunculus gracilis,* and also with a male specimen of *Tinnunculus punctatus* from the Mauritius.

	Total length.	Length of wing from carpal joint.	Tarsus.	Middle toe with claw.
	inches.	inches.	inch.	inch.
Tinnunculus gracilis	9¾ *	6	1⅛	1⅛
Madagascar Kestrel :				
Specimen A, ♂	10¾	7½	1½	1¼
Specimen B, ♂	11			
Tinnunculus punctatus, ♂	11½	7¼	1¾	1½

From the above Table it will be apparent that the Madagascar Kestrel exceeds the Seychelles species (*T. gracilis*) in all the above dimensions, whilst it is itself exceeded by the Mauritius bird (*T. punctatus*) in all except the length of the wing from the carpal joint.

The colouring of the two birds sent from Madagascar is not precisely identical. In specimen A, the feathers on the upper part of the head and on the back of the neck are of a dark grey, slightly tinged with rufous, with a darker shaft-mark passing down the centre of each feather. The back and scapulars are rufous, of a tint paler than that of the same parts in *T. gracilis,* but darker than in *T. punctatus,* and much resembling the colour of the back in *T. rupicola* (Daud.). The scapulars are spotted with darker ovate spots, one at the end of each feather, which are larger in proportion as they are further removed from the bird's head and neck. The wing-feathers are of a brownish black, the primaries being barred with rufous on their inner webs, and the secondaries and tertiaries on both webs. On the secondary feathers, the brownish-black bars are broader than the rufous; but on the tertiaries this is reversed. The rump is bluish grey, with a darker sagittate mark on each feather. The upper side of the tail is of a blackish-brown tint, with seven lighter transverse bars; these are grey towards the upper part of the tail, but tinged with rufous towards the lower part. The cheeks and throat are white, with the exception of an indistinctly defined dark moustache extending downwards and backwards from the angle of the mouth. All the under parts are also white, with the exception of a slight rufous tinge on the breast, and of dark lanceolate shaft-marks on the feathers of that part and of the inside of the wing near the carpal joint. The feathers on the inside of the wing, covering the roots of the primaries, show these marks in a more ovate form, which also appears on the feathers of the abdomen.

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* Allowing half an inch to cover an accidental defect in the end of the tail-feathers : this is a full allowance.

Specimen B differs from A in the rufous colour of the back being paler and duller, apparently from the action upon the feathers of the sun and weather, also in the sagittate marks on the rump being more sparsely distributed, in all the light transverse bars of the tail being grey, in the cheeks being of the same colour as the upper part of the head, in the ground-colour of the breast, abdomen, flanks, and outer sides of the thighs being of a dark rufous, and in the darker ovate spots being spread over the thighs and under tail-coverts.

The accompanying Plate, by Mr. Wolf, in which the upper figure represents specimen B, and the two lower figures specimen A in two attitudes, all reduced to one-third of their natural dimensions, will probably give a clearer idea than any more detailed description of the Madagascar Kestrel. They may be compared with the figure of *T. gracilis* in DesMurs's 'Iconographie Ornithologique,' pl. 25, and with that of *T. punctatus* in Temminck's 'Planches Coloriées,' pl. 45.

Should the readers of 'The Ibis' agree with me in considering the Kestrel of Madagascar a distinct species, I am sure they will also agree in the propriety of distinguishing it by the name of the naturalist by whom the specimens now described were collected, and of adopting for it the specific designation of *T. newtoni*.

In conclusion, I beg leave to add a list of the species of Kestrels which I have had the opportunity of personally examining (and all of which appear to me to be specifically distinct), arranged in what appears to me to be their natural order :—

Tinnunculus sparverius (*Linn.*).
—— sparverioides (*Vigors*).
—— gracilis (*Lesson*).
—— newtoni, *nobis.*
—— punctatus (*Temm.*).
—— rupicoloides (*Smith*).

Tinnunculus rupicola (*Daud.*).
—— moluccensis (*Schlegel*).
—— alaudarius (*Gmel.*).
—— cenchroides (*Vigors*).
—— cenchris (*Frisch*).

V.—*Notice of the Occurrence of the Tawny Pipit* (Anthus rufescens) *in Great Britain.* By George Dawson Rowley.

The fact that the Tawny Pipit is common in France would lead us to suppose that it might be found, more or less frequently, on our south coasts. I think I have established, in two instances, that it already has been taken near Brighton, and have little doubt that more examples would have been known had the attention of ornithologists been directed towards the species. Late on the evening of Sept. 24th last, a person named Wing brought a Pipit, in the flesh, to Mr. George Swaysland, naturalist, 4 Queen's Road, Brighton, with directions to stuff it for him. Swaysland saw at once that it was a curious bird, and, after some conversation, induced Wing to part with it, calling to his attention that he did not collect, and it could not be a particular object of interest to any one but an ornithologist.

Having succeeded, Swaysland took down the particulars, and sent for me. I read Wing's address and the paper, which stated that he had shot the bird on the cliff, about a mile and a half from Rottingdean, near Brighton. It was pointed out to him by a coast-guard or fisherman; and the bird flew just over the cliff at first, then alighted on the edge, and was killed. I examined the shot-marks, and next compared it with Yarrell and Morris, at first thinking it was *Anthus ricardi*; but the hind claw proving much too short, I began to suspect we had a new species before us. Taking time to reflect, I mentioned it to Mr. Alfred Newton, who observed, "Can it be *Anthus rufescens*, a